

Discover Docklands

A walk of contrasts from nineteenth century warehouses to twenty first century skyscrapers; from the quiet backwaters of Poplar Dock to magnificent views of the River Thames; from the hard lives of the Victorian dockers to the daily bustle of London's major business centre.



The route plan

Start: Blackwall DLR Station
Finish: West India Quay DLR Station
Distance: 2.61 miles (4.2km)
Time: 1 hour

This route is suitable for wheelchairs and prams with mainly tarmacked surfaces and only minor slopes.



There is a small section of the route which is not level. Here an alternative accessible route has been identified on the map with the wheelchair user symbol.

All DLR stations and the museum at West India Quay are wheelchair accessible.

History

London has been an important port since Roman times and by the eighteenth century it was the busiest port in the world.

In 1802 the West India Company built the first dock on the Isle of Dogs which enabled ships to unload cargoes of rum, sugar and coffee directly into the warehouses on West India Quay, now Grade 1 listed buildings.

During the second world war the docks were a major target for bombing. Despite this, trade survived and in 1964 a record 61 million tonnes of cargo passed through the docks. This was followed by a decline in the 1970s as the docks could not accommodate larger container ships. The docks were finally closed in 1980.

In 1981, the London Docklands Development Corporation took over the regeneration of the docks for business, housing and entertainment. One Canada Square, the tallest building in the UK, was opened in 1991. It is popularly known as Canary Wharf, a reminder of the days when goods travelled here from the Canary Islands.

The waterspace is now managed by British Waterways London. New moorings for leisure craft and the potential for new waterborne businesses are contributing to the docklands renaissance, creating a scene that the nineteenth century dockers would have found impossible to comprehend.

Find out more about the history of the docks and the lives of the dockers on information panels along the route, marked on the map with this symbol:

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YOUR LOCAL WATERWAY

Walking in Docklands



Docklands walk

At Blackwall DLR station turn left following the signs to Billingsgate Fish Market. Head down the ramp or stairs and turn left towards McDonald's. Opposite McDonald's take the stairs on your left, or the ramp further along to reach Poplar Dock. Follow the dock's edge with the water on your right.

i Stop and see: The history of Poplar Dock

Continue to Preston's Road. Here walkers can turn right into Landon's Close, walk up two steps to rejoin the dockside continuing over two footbridges and through an archway. Turn left passing the houses, then turn right into Preston's Road.

♿ For a level route continue along Preston's Road.

★ Added attractions: River Thames and the iconic storm water pumping station - cross Preston's Road and head over the blue bridge. Turn left, signposted Riverside Walkway, to view the Thames and the unusual

architecture of the storm water pumping station.

At the end of Preston's Road, cross over the blue bridge and turn right.

i Stop and see: The history of West India Dock Entrance

Pick up the path next to the white fence and continue along the South Dock following signs towards South Quay DLR Station.

i Stop and see: The history of West India Docks

Turn right onto Marsh Wall Road, cross the footbridge and turn right to continue following the dockside.

★ Added attractions: Take a break – instead of turning right cross over Marsh Wall to continue along the dockside for waterside cafés and bars.

For a shorter route cross the footbridge to Heron Quay DLR station or Canary Wharf underground. For a longer route

continue past the bridge and turn left through the buildings to rejoin Marsh Wall. Turn right and follow the road until you reach the Impounding Station.

i Stop and see: The history of South Dock and City Canal

★ Added attractions: River Thames, water inlet and impounding station - cross Marsh Wall between City Pride Pub and the Impounding Station then take pedestrian crossing over Westferry Road. **Stop and see:** The history of Limehouse Lock.

Continue along Marsh Wall, cross the road, then turn right into Heron Quays to follow Middle Branch Dock on your left.

Turn left at the end of the dock, walk past Canary Wharf underground station and take the stairs in front of you, or the lift to the left of the stairs to the upper level at Canada Square.

In front of One Canada Square turn left along South Colonnade. Cross the road turning right into Cabot Square. At the other side of the square take the stairs or lift down to the footbridge.

Finish your walk by crossing over the footbridge to the bars and restaurants of West India Quay.

On the quayside turn left for the Museum of London Docklands and **stop and see:** The history of West India Dock North Quay opposite, or turn right for West India Quay DLR Station.

